

Questions and Answers for: **General Businesses** **Master Business License** **Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs**



The Master Business License Program streamlines the District's licensing procedures and requires all District businesses with \$2,000 or more in gross receipts, including non-profit organizations, to obtain a Master Business License.

1. Who must get a Master Business License?

Any business or individual, including a non-profit organization, that earns more than \$2,000 in gross receipts per year in the District.

2. What is the deadline to get a Master Business License?

All businesses that were previously not required to get a license are encouraged to obtain an MBL during the amnesty period, which ends at the end of August 2002. After the amnesty period, businesses that operate without an MBL may be subject to fines of up to \$500.

3. How do I get a Master Business License?

- Existing License Holders – Your license will be converted to a Master Business License through the renewal process. You do not have to worry about getting an application, you will receive a renewal form in the mail. As long as you have a current license after the amnesty period expires, even if it is not a Master Business License, you will not be subject to a fine.
- New Applicants -- Master A (businesses requiring an inspection or other preliminary approval) and Master B (all other businesses that do not fall under Master A, including most home-based businesses) – may obtain an application:
 - In person at DCRA's Business License Center, 941 N. Capitol Street, NE, Room 1100;
 - By applying online at the District's Business Resource Center, www.brc.dc.gov.*

4. What do I need to get a Master Business License?

You will need to fulfill the following requirements in order to apply:

- a. Certificate of Occupancy or Home Occupation Permit (HOP). You may request use of the certificate of occupancy number for the building you are located in from your landlord **if** your occupancy use matches the use on that C of O. Otherwise, you will need a separate C of O number. You may download applications at www.dcr.dc.gov, and click on "Permits."
- b. You must register with the Office of Tax and Revenue, and must show that you have filed an FR-500 for DC business tax. Please call (202) 727-4829 for more information, or visit the OTR website at www.dccfo.com.
- c. You must have a valid Federal Employee Identification Number (FEIN) or Social Security number.

* Only certain Master Bs are available online at this time. Please contact the MBL Info Center at (202) 442-4311, or by email at mbi.infocenter@dc.gov, to find out which businesses are available.

- d. If you are a corporation, partnership or limited liability company you must be registered in the District and in good standing. For instructions on how to register, please go to www.dkra.dc.gov and click on "Corporate Registration."
- e. You must submit a Clean Hands Self-Certification attesting that you do not owe more than \$100 to the DC government. The form is included in the MBL application packet.

5. What if I do not have a Certificate of Occupancy or HOP, can I still apply?

Yes, under the following conditions:

- Located in a Federal building – please enter "F 1 2 3 4 5" in the C of O field.
- Individual/independent contractor not operating out of the home and without a permanent business address – please enter "I 1 2 3 4 5" in the C of O field.

6. How do I get a Federal Employee Identification Number (FEIN), also known as a Tax Identification Number (TIN)?

Online, please go to www.brc.dc.gov. By phone, call 1-800-829-3676 to request a Form SS-4. After you obtain and fill out the form, call 1-866-816-2065 to obtain your FEIN over the phone. Sole proprietors may use their Social Security numbers.

7. What are the fees associated with the Master Business License?

Fees vary depending upon the type of business activity. Contact the MBL Info Center for more information. The following fees apply to all Master Business Licenses:

- New Master Business License fee (\$25) or Renewal fee (\$15)
- Endorsement fee (\$5 each)
- Certificate of Occupancy fee (depends on square footage)
- Home Occupation Permit fee (\$50)

8. How long is my MBL good for?

Your Master Business License is valid for two years. You will receive a renewal form in the mail prior to your expiration date. The renewal fee is \$15, plus underlying license fee and endorsement fee, as applicable. C of Os and HOPs remain valid as long as the ownership and use of premises remain the same, so therefore do not need to be renewed.

9. Where can I get more information?

- On the Internet – District's Business Resource Center, www.brc.dc.gov, or DCRA's website, www.dkra.dc.gov.
- Email – mbi.infocenter@dc.gov.
- By Phone – Please call (202) 442-4311, Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.
- In Person – You may pick up applications at the Business License Center, located at 941 N. Capitol Street, NE, Room 1100, Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

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